



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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Chief Executive Officer

December 14, 2007

To: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

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FEASIBILITY OF ADOPTING EPEAT (ELECTRONIC PRODUCTS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT TOOL) AS A COUNTY STANDARD FOR ACQUISITION OF COMPUTER PRODUCTS

On October 23, 2007, on motion of Supervisor Burke, your Board instructed this Office, in coordination with the Director of the Internal Services Department (ISD) and Chief Information Officer (CIO), to report back to your Board on the feasibility of requiring that newly acquired desktops, laptops, or other office computing products be EPEAT (Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool) compliant, minimally at the Bronze environmental performance ranking.

Summary

EPEAT is basically a set of voluntary environmental performance criteria for desktops, laptops and computer monitors. Manufacturers register their products, as well as the various environmental criteria they meet. The Green Electronics Council, an independent nonprofit organization that operates the EPEAT system, periodically reviews products to ensure they meet the stated criteria. There are three levels of certification; bronze, silver, and gold. Our review concludes that:

- EPEAT is consistent with the objectives established in the County's Energy and Environmental policy.
- The County's current computer agreement vendors already have, or nearly have, complete catalogues of EPEAT certified products at the bronze level of certification.

- These vendors do not charge a price premium for these products.
- There is sufficient time to allow for the establishment of a bronze level of certification prior to our next County Consolidated Computer Purchase Program solicitation scheduled for February 2008. ISD and CIO will include the standard in this solicitation.
- The County's purchasing standard for computer equipment should be at least EPEAT certification at a bronze level. ISD will modify its procedures to reflect this standard. In addition, ISD will continue to monitor the industry for purposes of determining the appropriate time to further strengthen the standard (i.e., to silver or gold certification).

In addition, as a component of the County's Energy and Environmental policy adopted by your Board, ISD has started a green purchasing program. In June 2007, ISD issued guidelines to County departments related to the procurement of environmentally preferable products. Concurrently, ISD has been working with other governmental purchasing groups and agencies to review and determine appropriate environmental standards and certifications for a multitude of product and service categories, including the use of the EPEAT standard.

The remainder of the report provides additional detail on this topic.

Description of the EPEAT Standard

Electronic equipment can have significant environmental impacts throughout the entire life cycle, from production, through use, to disposal. Acquiring environmentally preferable equipment can reduce energy consumption, reduce pollution from energy production, and reduce general and environmentally sensitive waste. EPEAT assists in the identification of environmentally preferable products that have been designed to have environmental benefits throughout their lifecycle.

The EPEAT standard includes 23 required criteria and 28 optional criteria. A computer product is awarded a "Bronze" rating if it meets all required criteria, which includes the following areas:

- 1) Reduction/elimination of environmentally sensitive materials – the product must comply with requirements for the restriction of hazardous materials including cadmium, mercury, lead, and brominated flame-retardants.

- 2) Materials selection – the declaration of recycled or bio-based plastic content and product weight.
- 3) End-of-life design – the product must be designed for easy disassembly, made of at least 65 percent reusable/recyclable materials and provide information for recyclers regarding materials with special handling needs.
- 4) Energy conservation – the product must comply with Energy Star specifications.
- 5) Life-cycle extension – an additional 3-year warranty must be available for purchase, and the product must be upgradeable with common tools.
- 6) End-of-life management – the product must include the option to purchase, at a competitive price, a take-back or recycling service that meets EPA environmental standards.
- 7) Corporate performance – the manufacturer must have an environmental policy, an environmental management system, and an environmental reporting system.
- 8) Packaging – no heavy metals can be added to any packaging component, easily separable materials, declaration of recycled content, optional criterion for manufacturer take-back of packaging materials for re-use or recycling.

Existing Products and Suppliers on County Agreements

Under the current County agreements, all four (4) manufacturers have product offerings that are registered and certified with EPEAT at the minimum of a “bronze” rating.

Based on the above, the adoption of the EPEAT “bronze” standard would not present a significant negative impact on the County’s existing products or product suppliers on County agreements.

EPEAT Requirements and Timelines for Manufacturer Certification

According to the EPEAT criteria, a manufacturer can apply for, submit verification material, and be registered for products by EPEAT within 30 days.

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The next County consolidated computer purchase is scheduled for February 2008. This provides any manufacturer with more than 60 days to bring their products within the EPEAT compliance standards and receive certification in order to participate in the next bid cycle. Since the bid cycle for the consolidated computer purchase program runs every six-months, no manufacturer who makes the effort and obtains certification within a reasonable time frame would be adversely impacted from participating in the County solicitations.

Conclusion

Adopting the EPEAT "bronze" standard in our solicitations and purchases of computer products is feasible and is consistent with the County's Energy and Environmental Policy. As such, ISD will include this standard in its purchasing guidelines.

If you have any additional questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Joe Sandoval, ISD's Purchasing Division Manager at (323) 267-2670, or via e-mail at JSandoval@isd.lacounty.gov

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c: All Department Heads